1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
SP23 Trumai SP23

Introduction

Many people do not read the prefaces to monographs. This one must be read in order to understand what follows. 114

The writer never met his co-author, Buell Quain, for Quain died sixteen years ago. Some six months before his death he had terminated a period of four months field research among the Trumaí Indians of the Xingú River in northern Matto Grosso, Brazil. Among his effects were his field notes, which represented the results of one of the most difficult investigations ever undertaken by an ethnologist.

In 1949, shortly after I commenced my graduate studies in anthropology, Professor Charles Wagley of Columbia University asked me to edit the Trumaí notes. After further consideration of the material, Professor Wagley and I concluded that the notes had been ordered as far as was possible by Quain's mother, Dr. Fannie Dunn Quain, and that they could best be presented in the form of a monograph, which I was to write.

First, let me describe Buell Quain's Trumaí notes. In essence they consist of a remarkably detailed field diary in which Quain had recorded the daily activities and events of the Trumaí village. If a woman walked from one house to another bearing food, it was duly stated. The play of the children, the facial expressions apparent during ceremonies, the slightest nuances of interpersonal behavior were all put into the notebook. Present also are charts showing the daily economic activities of every villager and a report, in all its minutiae, of what occurred in a household of an afternoon. Quain also set down in his daily log many comments made to him by his Trumaí informants and scraps of conversation which he overheard. 126

The notes are a triumph of participant observation. Quain understood very little Trumaí, although his diary shows that he was learning it rapidly by the time of his departure. He evidently maintained some communication with certain bilingual Trumaí by using Tupí, of which he appears to have had a fragmentary knowledge. Lacking the means to do detailed informant work, Quain leaned heavily on his observations of the behavior and activity of all the Trumaí, and he also learned much from his own personal interaction with them. He was deeply sensitive to the mutual relationships between himself and the subjects of his study, as he was completely alone in his sojourn; he did not even have a Brazilian backwoodsman for help and companionship. He entrusted 123 [127]

/194 cont./

609 123 [437] [262] It was only then that we recovered our senses and were able to understand the reason for the incident. Apparently the Trumaí had been animated by the urgent desire to barter as soon as possible and with as little ceremony as possible for some of our treasures in exchange for their miserable beijûs, which looked gray as though made with buckwheat flour, were coarse-grained, and tasted slightly sour. With this in mind they had been active everywhere. Of Wilhelm's companions, one had been busy with the hunting knife and the other with the gun at the same time, and the latter, while my cousin was trying in the friendliest way to keep them off, had unfortunately pressed the cock. In any case the culprit was the most surprised by the effect; otherwise he would not have been kicking so frightenedly on the ground.

In spite of the miraculous speed with which they dashed to the boats, however, the Trumaí had not lost all presence of mind. The two who had just been trying on Castro's and Antonio's hats did not forget in their hasty running to put them on well down over their heads. Another old hand had still found time on his flight to snatch up quickly one of the large fish lying on the beach.

Antonio's behavior when he was so unexpectedly deprived of his precious hat was characteristic. Without further ado he shot his pistol at the thief, but in his rage fortunately missed. And when we /Illustration appears here/ /195/ asked him whether he really wanted to kill the man, he nodded with the greatest composure, "Yes, he had my hat."

● 126 411 The returning men brought back a rich ethnological collection, at least in terms of the number of objects. The bows were very fine and strong; one was shot to pieces, proof that the shots had not been fired entirely happazardly. The arrows provided with pointed pieces of bamboo were plentiful; these bamboo blades, which, as could be easily seen, had been freshly sharpened, are only loosely inserted in the shaft with a little resin; after the arrow has reached its mark, they break off and remain embedded in the body. There was a single club, crudely worked, flat, 86 301 237 centimeters long. One feather ornament was particularly pretty; the green, orange-colored, and white feathers were mounted on

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 79]

/123 cont./

437 knives and some sacrifices from our personal belongings, we acquired a small, not unattractive collection. The people had protected from the Suyá and carried along with them the
● 126 things that were most important for us. There were feather
437 ornaments, necklaces of stone beads, a stone ax, valuable as
[439] an example of local manufacture, for the other Kulisehu tribes obtain their stone axes from the Trumaí, throwing sticks, a club, ten masks, dance clubs, large flutes, and various trifles.
411 To our astonishment, we did not see the large arrows with long, pointed pieces of bamboo, which the Trumaí had carried in 1884, a number of which they lost in their flight, and which we noticed had been sharpened for the encounter with us. They had probably been used up in the battle with the Suyá.

126 I spent as much time as possible during the evening writing beside a candle stub, in order to obtain a vocabulary. A
[115] younger chief proved very capable, except that in his enthusiasm he shouted with a loud voice, as though I were stone deaf.
123 Inquisitively the men squatted nearby, the witches were /124/
[601] busy at the fires, the children cried atsíu for mother and papá for father, through the branches magic moonlight poured over the strange camp scene, and soon the peace of night embraced the sleeping and the awake. We could sleep undisturbed, but were well aware that a few men remained sitting beside the fire.

The next morning, 26 October, there was great confusion. A large glass of arsenic pills had been stolen from me. Under the peculiar circumstances I would gladly have overlooked any kind of theft, but I could neither be without this arsenic for my part, nor let the Indians poison themselves with it. I was forced to suspect the Yaulapiti who had accompanied us, after our experiences in their village, and demanded that they give it back. They, of course, professed their innocence, the Trumaí became terribly afraid, the women, children, and part of the men escaped into the bushes and did not return even when one of the Yaulapiti actually brought the glass with the arsenic pills. According to his humble opinion, it had dropped out of my

T /124 cont./
123 pocket along the way. A certain amount was obviously missing; I hope it was distributed among various fanciers and taken by them with some success for the skin diseases particularly common among the Yaulapiti.

T
•126 Much as we were urged to depart, we still had to undertake at least the most important body measurements and would not relent; seven men were measured in haste, in between our packing, and the only photographic plate left was used for a group shot -- unfortunately ruined later.

T
122 At 9:45 we set out in two canoes, accompanied by four Trumaí. Three times one would have to sleep, they said, before reaching their villages. The Mehinakú could also be reached by way of the canals and only one day was needed to their second village. At 11:00 we landed near the Auetó village, at a place other than where we had left. In the damp
T
[132] leaves lay huge quantities of giant earthworms; wherever one put his foot, he stepped on them. The path led us to the two huts of the Yaulapiti-Auetó families.

T
361 It is advisable to insert here what Vogel and Perrot reported about the Trumaí villages after their return home from Schingú-Koblenz. They had not caught sight of an Indian, but below the place where the Kulisehu empties into the Kuluëne, on a bank five meters high, they had found one Trumaí village of eight houses and, a kilometer farther east, a second one of five
T T
727 houses with buildings under construction among them. The Suyá had burned down all the houses and smashed whatever
T
241 was left of large pots and utensils. There were plantings of remarkably large size and careful cultivation directly adjoining the
T
764 villages. About ten fresh graves were noted; judging from the circular excavation, the corpses had been buried in a squatting position. They seemed to lie deep; at least they were /125/
B
186 not uncovered by some superficial subsequent digging. Antonio had been very alarmed when Perrot said to him: "o doutor Carlos precisa d'uma cabeça /Doctor Carlos wants a head/." It was only with great effort that Antonio had been persuaded to go along on the trip and expose himself to the possibility of meeting the detested Trumaí.

B /159 cont./
101 and, in order not to do violence to the perfectly justified tribal
191 names, as actually happened in the case of the Nahuquá, we
197 may call them, where we need a comprehensive term, the potter tribes, according to their most important ethnological characteristic. Beside them stand the Yaulapiti as a closely related Nu-Aruak tribe, but one already clearly different in
B dialect and revealing other influences.
T
101 Thus the arithmetical problem has been simplified to the
197 extent that we have before us Karaiben in the Bakaïrí and Nahuquá, Nu-Aruak in the potter tribes and the Yaulapiti, Tupí in the Auetö and the Kamayurá, and, as an indivisible remainder, the Trumaí.

II. Anthropological.

B In order to have a record of the physical appearance of the
T
126 Kulisehu Indians, insofar as was possible during our brief acquaint-
128 ance with the individual tribes, a series of measurements were
141 taken, which did not turn out to be very numerous and are not evenly distributed according to the different tribes or the two sexes, yet nevertheless offer interesting material. Possible sources of error on the part of the observer may be put down as constant, since the measurements were all taken by Ehrenreich. He also took a far greater number of photographs than could be reproduced here; some of them, however, became very spotty and difficult
B to reproduce.* He expects to make further use of the illustrative
T
128
141

* As is shown in detail in the list of illustrations, the following are reproduced here in photographs: both sexes of the Bakaïrí, Mehinakú and Kamayurá, as well as only men of the Nahuquá and Auetö, while Yaulapiti and Trumaí are missing altogether.

material and to deal with the collected material of the measurements in detail and according to its comparative value for the

/170 cont./

B T 141 The Trumaí have the lowest figure of all for stature, breadth of outspread arms, head circumference, hand length, the highest for head height, length-breadth and length-height index of the skull, navel height, the Mehinakú the lowest figure for the length-breadth index of the skull, for height of navel, symphysis, iliac crest, and trochanter, the highest, on the other hand, for stature, shoulder breadth (just as they are also rather outstanding for breadth of outspread arms and chest circumference), for zygomatic-arch breadth, and, although arms and legs are short, for the length of foot and hand. The Nahuquá do not have a 6 for any measure, but show relatively many 1's and 2's.

B T 142 ●126 /171/ The skin color is characterized by yellow-gray loam shades in all gradations; sunburn, dirt, and painting made it extremely difficult to determine the original color, and it was only under the cotton bindings on the upper arms or lower legs that one realized how light the Indians actually were. Wilhelm made a little color chart on the spot; according to it, the average shade falls between No. 30 and 33 of the Broca chart; the darker tones had a definite lilac-violet admixture, especially on chest and abdomen, the lighter tones a somewhat yellow one. We also used the Radde charts and found the greatest similarity for forehead and cheek with 33 m to n or also 33 o, the upper arms approximately 33 m.

B T 142 The head hair was black; especially among the Bakaïrí, Nahuquá, and Auetó, brownish black. The bluish-black shade did not occur. On the other hand, the hair, especially of the Bakaïrí children, looked strangely light and faded if the light struck it obliquely; at times it had a dark red shimmer. We never encountered "horsehair." The head hair was moderately thick and straight or, especially among the Bakaïrí and Nahuquá, decidedly wavy. To our surprise, we saw out-and-out curly heads among the Bakaïrí, such as, for example, the type shown on Plate 13. How much of it was nature, how much art, is difficult to say. At any rate, old Paleko in Maigéri, who had long since become superior to the vanity of youth, had short, curly hair. Among the Bakaïrí, the hair is wavy without artificial treatment. Sometimes the forehead was hairy almost to the eyebrows.